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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 002574

SIPDIS

FOR AF/FO KANSTEINER AND BELLAMY AND AF/S
NSC FOR SR AFRICA DIR JENDAYII FRAZER
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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN VIEW OF ITS BILATERAL COMMISSION
MEETING WITH ZIMBABWE

REF: HARARE 2560

Classified By: JGSULLIVAN FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

1.(C) Summary: South African High Commissioner Ndou told the Ambassador Nov 19 that the Nov 10-11 Zimbabwean-South African Bilateral Commission had focused principally on economic and technical issues. He took some comfort in the Zimbabwean Government delegation's readiness to acknowledge their profound needs and said that SAG would engage on many of these without providing serious subsidies or cash. On political issues, the GOZ confined itself to asking the SAG to help repair its relations with the UK and US, while sticking to the hollow argument that it cannot dialogue with the MDC so long as the MDC maintains its suit to overturn presidential election results. Apparently, the SAG did not push the issue. End Summary

2. (C) SAG HC Ndou, who participated in the Nov 10-11 Bilateral Commission meeting told the Ambassador that the meeting had focused largely on technical and economic issues, discussed at a Ministerial level. For example, the GOZ acknowledged its acute shortage of seeds and other farm inputs-- SAG will seek to help through discount offers of seeds, but this will be far short of needs. ESKOM will also study the Hwange, Zimbabwe power plant with a view of improving regional power capacity, but will only be providing energy that Zimbabwe can pay for. Similarly, SASOL will only maintain its current agreement with NOCZIM, which provides for SASOL to provide fuel only after receiving Zim payment.

3.(C) On food, the SAG committed to help Zimbabwe within the limits of the food pledge made to the entire South African region for which Malawi and other countries are also competing. Asked whether food for Zimbabwe would go to the World Food Program or the GOZ for distribution, Ndou suggested that South Africa's contribution might be divided between the two. The Ambassador suggested that providing food directly to the GOZ would be problematic, given GOZ politicization of food under its control. Ndou noted that Foreign Minister Mudenge had claimed to FM Zuma that the WFP's suspension of food deliveries to Insiza were caused by an MDC-NGO effort to direct WFP food to its supporters. Ndou said he told Zuma that this was only one version of the truth (a euphemistic way to describe a lie, since Mudenge has the WFP's full documentation of ZANU-PF militants' seizure of WFP under the tolerant eyes of police.)

4.(C) On land, Ndou said that the GOZ had sought to turn the discussion from how the land redistribution had been carried out to how the "completed" process could be made to work. The GOZ claimed that the missing element was UK compensation for farmers and international assistance for new farmers -- themes FonMin Zuma echoed in her press remarks. Ndou said that the SAG had urged a reengagement on the Abuja accord commitments with Nigeria again taking a lead.

5.(C) Ndou said there was little engagement on political issues, as Mudenge maintained the line that no dialogue with the MDC was possible so long as the MDC maintained its court challenge of the presidential election. Instead, the GOZ asked South Africa to help the UK and US to improve relations with Zimbabwe. It does not appear that the SAG pushed back very hard and Ndou said that the SAG hoped that governance issues could be addressed as a consequence of GOZ acceptance of NEPAD. The Ambassador took the occasion to outline his recent discussions with GOZ officials on the political crisis and to underline that there was no exit from Zimbabwe's inter-related crises without addressing the political crisis. Ndou did not disagree, but it does not appear that the SAG took this line at the Pretoria meetings.

6. (C) Ndou said that the SADC-EU meeting in Maputo had been spoiled by Foreign Minister Mudenge who took a rhetorical and absolutist position, thereby rejecting the position brokered by South Africa and others which would have had the EU and SADC continuing to dialogue on Zimbabwe. Instead, the final communique spelled out that the EU and SADC disagreed totally on Zimbabwe.

17. (C) Ndou noted that the number of Zimbabwean applicants for visas to South Africa was growing daily, in part due to the UK's new visa regime. He said that about 40 per cent of these visa recipients never returned to Zimbabwe.

SULLIVAN